

Shouting Match Behind Closed Doors

By Drew Pearson and
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There were some highly interesting incidents during the closed-door sessions of the Senate Ethics Committee before it opened its doors to the public.

The incidents included at least two shouting tirades by Sen. Tom Dodd (D-Conn.), and some long-winded testimony by his Wall Street attorney, John F. Sonnett. These plus Dodd's charge that he was not getting a fair hearing finally contributed to the committee's decision to open its doors so the public could see for itself whether the hearings were fair. It was also believed that Sonnett would be less long-winded if he had the public watching him.

One of Dodd's tirades occurred when two Senators slipped from the committee rostrum for a couple of minutes to visit the men's room.

Dodd immediately demanded that the hearing be suspended until they returned. He reminded Chairman John Stennis (D-Miss.) angrily that he had agreed all six committee members would listen to the testimony.

Stennis replied patiently that the proceedings couldn't be held up every time a Senator left the room for a few minutes.

On another occasion, Dodd angrily challenged the authenticity of a handwritten

postscript at the bottom of a letter he had received from Julius Klein, the registered West German agent, asking Dodd to write to Dr. Luger Westrick, a top German official, on his behalf. The postscript, in Klein's handwriting, read: "Please destroy. I have made no copies."

When this was introduced, Dodd shouted that his former employees who had Xeroxed the documents might have forged the postscript.

Chairman Stennis promptly offered to consult a handwriting expert. Dodd's attorneys went into a huddle and Sonnett announced that the attorneys were satisfied that the handwriting was Klein's.

'Trying to Be Fair'

Later, Dodd engaged the chairman in a shouting match over whether the hearings should be thrown open to the public.

Stennis wanted to expedite the investigation, but Dodd wanted his attorneys to have more time to cross-examine witnesses behind closed doors. The two Senators, red in the face, shouted at one another.

The Mississippi Senator, a former judge, is usually the height of patience. But he finally snapped: "We are trying to be fair to you, Senator. We are trying to do what is right. We are trying to lean over backwards."

Certainly no one else under Senate investigation has ever been granted all the special

privileges Dodd has received. He is represented by a battery of attorneys that outnumbers the six Senators on the committee and they constantly delve into papers piled high on a table set aside for them. A private detective, James Lynch, stands by ready to slip surreptitious notes to the attorneys as they question hostile witnesses about their private lives.

Dodd has been granted the right to cross-examine all witnesses, a privilege the Senate has never accorded anyone else.

The committee also turned over to Dodd all the evidence against him, including all the documents which we delivered to the committee.

The committee also sent Dodd the transcripts of all the closed-door hearings. This gave him an advantage over other witnesses, who have had no opportunity to study everything that happened behind closed doors.

Meany-Reuther Row

More details have now leaked out regarding the red-hot showdown between the two most powerful union leaders in the U. S. A. — George Meany, president of the AFL-CIO, and Walter Reuther, president of the giant United Auto Workers.

During the closed-door executive committee session, Joe Beirne, president of the Communications Workers,

waved a May 22 Los Angeles Times article quoting Reuther's criticism of the Central Intelligence Agency's ties with Jay Lovestone, head of the AFL-CIO International Affairs Department. Lovestone, a former member of the Communist party, has been chief adviser to Meany on foreign affairs, but it was not generally known he was linked to the CIA.

"This is all very disastrous, if true, but nobody should go to the press about it," said Beirne. "It automatically closes out the AFL-CIO from taking any part in international political affairs, since we leave ourselves open to suspicion of possible intrigues. I also think your own two statements to the press about matters we are discussing here were very ill-advised, Walter."

"I only did what my executive board of the Auto Workers instructed me to do," shot back Reuther.

"You're beating a dead horse, Joe," Joe Curran of the Maritime Workers Union chastised Beirne. "Walter's tactics were wrong, I agree, but he's right in opposing any involvement between Central Intelligence and the AFL-CIO. That's a matter of principle that we should resolve once and for all."

"I'm a friend of Walter's," declared Beirne. "There's nothing personal in this. Walter knows it."

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